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ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Written statement* submitted by North-South XXI, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[20 December 1999]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, as received from the submitting non-governmental organization.

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Critical follow-up of global negotiations within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO)

1. Human rights cannot be exercised effectively and democratization will continue to be an empty phrase until the world's gross domestic product (GDP) is distributed equitably.

2. WTO, the creature of the great Powers, claims that it can guarantee respect for economic and social rights by establishing a free-trade regime and throwing open all markets without restriction. The social aspirations of the countries of the South will be met through comprehensive integration into the world economy.

3. The way that WTO works at present favours the industrial countries and, among the States of the South, only the "emerging economies", as the Seattle Conference clearly showed. It does not take account of the discriminatory logic of investment policies based solely on security and profitability, and it glosses over the "financialization" of the economy resulting in the decline of real material production, to be replaced by a speculative and parasitical system that aggravates unemployment and is completely indifferent to the poor. The transnational social movement organized by critical non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which crystallized around the Seattle Conference, rejects this transformation of the world into a vast market with a monopoly on the ability to guarantee genuine respect for economic, social and cultural rights.

4. The alternative declarations of these critical NGOs, such as the final statement of the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, are reference documents for the Commission on Human Rights and the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights. The Commission on Human Rights should do everything in its power to help resolve the contradiction between the principles and current mode of operation of WTO and the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights.